

**Amendments to the Claims:**

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

**Listing of Claims:**

Claim 1 (currently amended): A pet food comprising a mixture of a protein, a carbohydrate, a fat, a first dietary level of protein and a supplemental amount of at least one amino acid in an amount effective to maintain lean body mass protection equivalent to a pet food containing a second dietary level of protein which is higher than the first dietary level of protein, wherein the at least one amino acid is selected from lysine, cysteine and combinations thereof, the lysine comprising from about 2.7% to about 3% by weight of the pet food and the cysteine comprising from about 0.50% to about 0.75% by weight of the pet food.

Claims 2-6 (canceled):

Claim 7 (currently amended): A pet food in accordance with claim 1 wherein the pet food is at least one of an extruded food, a canned food, and a baked dry food.

Claim 8 (currently amended): A pet food comprising a mixture of a protein, a carbohydrate, a fat, a dietary protein level and a supplemental amount of at least one amino acid sufficient to maintain muscle mass in a senior feline, wherein the at least one amino acid is selected from lysine, cysteine and combinations thereof, the lysine comprising from about 6.7% to about 12.5% by weight of the pet food and the cysteine comprising from about 1.67% to about 2.68% by weight of the pet food.

Claims 9-13 (canceled):

Claim 14 (currently amended): A pet food in accordance with claim 8 wherein the dietary protein level is in the range of about 28% to about 35% by weight of the ~~feline diet~~ pet food dry matter.

Claim 15 (currently amended): A pet food in accordance with claim 8 wherein the amount of the at least one amino acid is sufficient to maintain the muscle mass of a senior feline substantially equivalent to that attainable from a ~~feline~~ pet food including a 50% by weight dietary protein level.

Claim 16 (currently amended): A pet food in accordance with claim 8 wherein the pet food is at least one of an extruded food, a canned food, and a baked dry food.

Claim 17 (withdrawn): A food supplement comprising at least one amino acid in an amount effective to maintain a feline lean body mass protection substantially equivalent to a pet food containing a first dietary protein level when the feline is fed a pet food containing a second, lower, dietary protein level in combination with the food supplement.

Claim 18 (withdrawn): A food supplement in accordance with claim 17 wherein the at least one amino acid is selected from lysine and cysteine.

Claim 19 (withdrawn): A food supplement in accordance with claim 18 wherein the amount of lysine is in the range from about 2.0% to about 3.5% of the feline diet.

Claim 20 (withdrawn): A food supplement in accordance with claim 18 wherein the amount of cysteine is in the range from about 0.50% to about 0.75% of the feline diet.

Claim 21 (withdrawn): A food supplement in accordance with claim 18 wherein the pet food includes a dietary protein level in the range from about 28% to about 35%.

Claim 22 (withdrawn): A food supplement in accordance with claim 21 wherein the food comprises an amount of lysine in the range from about 6.7% to about 12.5% of the dietary protein level in the feline diet.

Claim 23 (withdrawn): A food supplement in accordance with claim 21 wherein the amount of cysteine is from about 1.67% to about 2.68% of the dietary protein level in the feline diet.

Claim 24 (withdrawn): A process for preparing a feline food which comprises providing as a part of a feline ration, a supplemental amount of at least one amino acid in an amount effective to provide a feline lean body mass protection equivalent to that attainable from a diet containing about 50% protein.

Claim 25 (withdrawn): A process in accordance with claim 24 wherein the at least one amino acid is selected from lysine and cysteine.

Claim 26 (withdrawn): A process in accordance with claim 25 wherein the amount of lysine is in the range from about 2.0% to about 3.5% of the feline diet.

Claim 27 (withdrawn): A process in accordance with claim 25 wherein the amount of cysteine is in the range from about 0.50% to about 0.75% of the feline diet.

Claim 28 (withdrawn): A method for retarding pre-mature aging of a feline comprising: incorporating, in a feline food having a protein content of less than about 35%, a supplemental amount of at least one amino acid in an amount effective to retard premature aging compared to premature aging experienced by a feline fed the food without the supplemental amount of the at least one amino acid; and feeding the food with the supplemental amount of the at least one amino acid to the feline.

Claim 29 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 28 wherein the at least one amino acid comprises at least one of lysine and cysteine.

Claim 30 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 29 wherein the amount of lysine is in the range from about 2.0% to about 3.5% of the feline diet.

Claim 31 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 29 wherein the amount of cysteine is in the range from about 0.50% to about 0.75% of the diet.

Claim 32 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 28 wherein incorporating comprises manufacturing the food with the supplemental amount of the at least one amino acid incorporated therein.

Claim 33 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 28 wherein incorporating comprises applying the supplemental amount of the at least one amino acid to the food.

Claim 34 (withdrawn): A method for providing a feline with enhanced health benefits derived from its diet, said method comprising: incorporating in a feline food a supplemental amount of at least one amino acid in an amount sufficient to provide enhanced health benefits over that accorded by the food without the supplemental amount of the at least one amino acid; and feeding the food with the supplemental amount of the at least one amino acid to the feline.

Claim 35 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 34 wherein the at least one amino acid comprises at least one of lysine and cysteine.

Claim 36 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 35 wherein the amount of lysine is in the range from about 2.0% to about 3.5% of the feline diet.

Claim 37 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 35 wherein the amount of cysteine is in the range from about 0.50% to about 0.75% of the feline diet.

Claim 38 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 34 wherein incorporating comprises manufacturing a food with the supplemental amount of the at least one amino acid incorporated therein.

Claim 39 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 34 wherein incorporating comprises applying the supplemental amount of the at least one amino acid to the food.

Claim 40 (withdrawn): A method for maintaining senior feline immune function, said method comprising: incorporating, in a feline diet having a dietary protein level less than about 35%, a supplemental amount of at least one amino acid selected from lysine and cysteine in an amount sufficient to maintain the senior feline immune function substantially equivalent to that attainable from a diet containing about 50% protein; and feeding the diet with the supplemental amount of the at least one amino acid to the feline.

Claim 41 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 40 wherein the amount of lysine is in the range from about 2.0% to about 3.5% of the feline diet.

Claim 42 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 40 wherein the amount of cysteine is in the range from about 0.50% to about 0.75% of the diet.

Claim 43 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 40 wherein incorporating comprises incorporating an amount of lysine in the range from about 6.7% to about 12.5% of the dietary protein level in the feline diet.

Claim 44 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 40 wherein incorporating comprises incorporating an amount of cysteine in the range from about 1.67% to about 2.68% of the dietary protein level in the feline diet.

Claim 45 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 40 wherein incorporating comprises manufacturing a food with the supplemental amount of the at least one amino acid incorporated therein.

Claim 46 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 40 wherein incorporating comprises applying the supplemental amount of the at least one amino acid as a coating to the food.

Claim 47 (withdrawn): A method of compensating for a lowered dietary protein level in a feline diet, said method comprising feeding a feline an amount of at least one amino acid sufficient to compensate for the lowered dietary protein level by providing substantially the same lean body mass protection to the feline that a feline diet including a higher dietary protein level would provide.

Claim 48 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 47 wherein the at least one amino acid comprises at least one of lysine and cysteine.

Claim 49 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 48 wherein the amount of lysine is in the range from about 2.0% to about 3.5% of the feline diet.

Claim 50 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 48 wherein the amount of lysine is in the range from about 6.7% to about 12.5% of the dietary protein level in the feline diet.

Claim 51 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 48 wherein the amount of cysteine is in the range from about 0.50% to about 0.75% of the diet.

Claim 52 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 48 wherein the amount of cysteine is in the range from about 1.67% to about 2.68% of the dietary protein level in the feline diet.

Claim 53 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 47 further comprising incorporating the at least one amino acid in a food fed to the feline.

Claim 54 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 47 further comprising providing the at least one amino acid as a supplement to a food fed the feline.

Claim 55 (withdrawn): A method in accordance with claim 47 wherein the lowered dietary protein level comprises a dietary protein level less than about 35%.